



TechLink: A Valued Resource in Licensing Federal Technologies

U.S. government agencies have a legislative mandate to attempt to transfer their inventions to the private sector for conversion into new products and services that benefit the nation's economy. The Air Force has been a leader in using "partnership intermediaries" to accomplish this mission. These state, local government, or nonprofit entities typically help their federal partners with technology transfer in order to generate technology-based economic development in their regions.

In 1999, the Air Force signed a first-of-a-kind agreement with Montana State University (MSU), resulting in the creation of MSU's TechLink, the first national partnership intermediary established by any U.S. government agency. Its mission is to help the national network of Department of Defense (DOD) laboratories become more successful in licensing their patented inventions to industry.

The approximately 100 DOD labs nationwide are awarded around 500 new patents each year. Before TechLink's involvement, the DOD executed up to 30 licensing agreements with industry annually. Since then, TechLink has played a key role in doubling the average number of licensing agreements to 60 per year. Over the past five years, it has brokered or facilitated more than half of all DOD licensing agreements.

To achieve this success, TechLink engages in a rigorous process that includes screening all new

DOD patented inventions; selecting a revolving portfolio of 75 inventions based on readiness level; engaging in highly focused marketing to industry; assisting companies with evaluating new technologies; helping companies prepare license applications and commercialization plans; and facilitating the entire licensing process to achieve "win-win" agreements between DOD labs and companies.

TechLink's efforts have been highly effective. It has established over 330 license agreements that have transferred approximately 860 DOD inventions to industry. In addition, TechLink has brokered an additional 560 Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADAs) and other technology transfer agreements and partnerships between DOD and industry. These partnerships involve nearly 100 DOD labs and R&D organizations.

In 2012, TechLink surveyed companies to determine the total sales of new products and services resulting from TechLink-brokered agreements during 2000-2011. The companies reported that they had generated over \$1 billion in sales directly related to these agreements.

TechLink illustrates how well the Air Force has forged a partnership with a state government entity to achieve widespread technology transfer success for DOD laboratories.



 www.af.mil

 facebook.com/USairforce

 [@usairforce](https://twitter.com/usairforce)



**MONTANA &
NATIONAL**